

# monitoring report

Elections B&H '96

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## THE B&H MEDIA WEEK IN REVIEW: 26 AUGUST - 1 SEPTEMBER

As the election campaign enters its final stage, the media environment deteriorates. Tribal identities and exclusive political loyalties are manifest. Broadcasters who have sought to maintain their impartiality and professionalism show increasing signs of bowing to implicit if not explicit political pressures. The otherwise estimable Sarajevo press displays a worrying herd instinct. Regime media elsewhere are abandoning any pretence of abiding by the OSCE rules to which they have previously at least paid lip service. So-called independent media are aligning themselves with one or another party or national persuasion. The much-touted Open Broadcast Network (aka TVIN or Bildt TV) remains conspicuously off the air.

None of this is surprising, although much of it is depressing. Whether it matters very much in the absence of more fundamental preconditions for free and fair elections on 14 September is a moot point. What does matter is that enough moderate, civilised, independent, public-spirited and professionally competent media should survive these elections to help make Bosnia & Hercegovina capable of sustaining a political culture which will give peace - and the **next** elections - a chance.

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*Monitoring Report* will appear as usual next week, covering the period 2-8 September. Notable media events in the last week of the campaign will be flagged, if need be, by short press releases in the days leading up to the poll. A final report on the media's role in the electoral process - and vice versa - will be issued by the end of the month. Funding and stamina permitting, media monitoring

may continue at a reduced tempo. Readers of this bulletin are cordially invited to submit their views regarding the usefulness both of the past 14 weeks' worth of *Monitoring Report* and of a possibly analogous exercise in future.

### Slippage at TV B&H

**TV B&H's** evening news maintained its offensive last week against the OSCE's P-2 voter registration forms. This meant not only blanket coverage of SDA-led demands for the postponement of the municipal elections, threats to boycott the polling abroad and calls for the nullification of the dreaded P-2 forms, but also the tailoring of reports to further these ends.

The worst example was an item broadcast on 27 August concerning that day's session of the B&H Assembly. "Dnevnik" carried long excerpts from Provisional Election Commission member Kasim Begić's report demanding both the postponement of the local elections and the extension of the OSCE mission. According to Begić, the latter would also mean the re-registration of voters and the prolongation of IFOR's mandate.

"Dnevnik" presented Begić's remarks as if they were the conclusions of the Assembly as a whole. This was far from being the case. Not only was no mention made of the firm opposition of HDZ leader Ivan Bender to the postponement of the municipal elections, but a voice-over obscured the fact that UBSD deputy Sejfudin Tokić had expressed only conditional support for the SDA line. He had also made numerous criticisms of the government

which were not noted. The impression of parliamentary unanimity was spurious.

Unappeased by Ambassador Robert Frowick's decision to postpone the municipal polls, "Dnevnik" led its bulletin the next day (28 August) with (1) the call by the SDA to freeze electoral activity abroad, (2) the summons by the Party for B&H to boycott the foreign vote and (3) the demand of the usually unheard-from B&H Patriotic Party for the total abandonment of the elections.

The campaign continued on 29 August, with more attacks on the P-2 form from both the SDA and the Party for B&H. Haris Silajdžić emerged from a meeting with Carl Bildt to declare that any election in which the P-2 form played a part would legalise genocide. But no reference was made to Bildt's own statement in which he admitted that the P-2 form had been abused, but deprecated any boycott of the 14 September poll.

The lead item on 31 August was President Izetbegović's speech at "The Return to the Drina" rally at Grebak. Having been assured by US envoy John Kornblum that Republika Srpska would not be allowed to secede after the elections, Izetbegović announced that he was withdrawing his recommendation to voters abroad to abstain from the poll. As far as "Dnevnik" was concerned, this was the news from Grebak that mattered. Otherwise, it was a party occasion.

But "Dnevnik" has not lately been so punctilious; and, in this case, viewers were denied an opportunity to see very much of a rally at which the unity of party, army and religion were again on - potentially frightening - display. Certainly **NTV Studio 99** in Sarajevo enjoyed giving its viewers a scare - or two. (See below.) The gathering at Grebak was, editorially, a difficult call. But for those who saw the Islamic trappings of the event on "Oko 22", the suspicion was strong that TV B&H chose not to undermine SDA claims to favour a civil society and secular state.

"Dnevnik" covered another SDA rally on 1 September, this time in Zenica. B&H Premier Hasan Muratović used the occasion to put forward yet more conditions for the party's participation in the 14 September elections: the total elimination both of the P-2 forms and the governmental organs of the Herceg-Bosna statelet. Although the pictures showed a stadium full of people (approximately 20,000), the reporter made no allusion to the size of the crowd. The report from Grebak, however, had said that 20,000 people

were present, but without offering pictorial support. Is it perhaps the case that no SDA politician is allowed to match Izetbegović as a crowd-puller?

The big story on 29 and 30 August was the attack by Serb police on Bošnjaks who had returned to the village of Mahala (near Zvornik) to repair their homes. Their rescue by IFOR, which then proceeded to arrest and disarm the Serb policemen, cast IFOR in an uncharacteristically favourable light on the 29th. It emerged the next day, however, that IFOR had released the Serbs and returned their weapons to the RS authorities. The incidental revelation that guns confiscated from the Bošnjaks had also been returned - as well as the story of the lifting of a Serb mob's siege of the IPTF station in Zvornik - provided an uncomfortable echo of the bad old days of UNPROFOR.

Just as "Dnevnik" had consigned news of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Croatia and FR Yugoslavia to the twenty-third minute of its broadcast on 23 August, so too was the visit to Sarajevo on 26 August of an economic delegation from Belgrade (led by a vice-premier) relegated to the nether regions of the bulletin (as item 16 in the running order). For **TV Serbia**, on the other hand, this was very big news indeed. (See report below.)

The two series of election broadcasts on TV B&H continue to be free and fair. They are also long (either 60 or 120 minutes in length), often disjointed in terms of subjects debated and usually boring. According to various polls, they are not watched regularly by many people. So far as election news is concerned, "Dnevnik" remains the principal source of information. It is, therefore, a matter for concern that, in the final weeks of the campaign, "Dnevnik" evinces a continuing tendency either to allow the ruling SDA to set its news agenda or to treat that party with especial consideration.

## Inconsistency on Radio B&H

**Radio B&H's** afternoon "Dnevnik" was just as preoccupied last week with the fate of the local elections and the P-2 forms as was its television counterpart. But in the continuing absence of synoptic or analytical reports by the programme's own journalists - or of interviews with relevant protagonists - the succession of party statements and notices produced a serial polyphony from which it was hard to extract much meaning. The

number of parties accorded mention continued to rise, yet only the announcement by the SDA on 26 August that it was to co-finance the reconstruction of the National Library (Vijećnica) in Sarajevo stood out for its novelty.

Three other stories covered by the 15.00 "Dnevnik" deserve mention:

- The Mahala IFOR incident was handled inadequately and confusingly. The absence of any report from on or near the spot was lamentable.
- On the other hand, Radio B&H had its microphone in the right place when Haris Silajdžić exploded in anger on 31 August at what he regarded as John Kornblum's betrayal of his undertaking to see to it that the hated P-2 was put to death. As far as Silajdžić was concerned, this meant that the US administration was now ready to reconcile itself to ethnic cleansing and genocide.
- "Dnevnik" also had a correspondent on hand in Velika Kladuša on 30 August, the eve of Fikret Abdić's threatened return for a rally on his home ground. The reporter assured listeners that the authorities were prepared for him, but suggested that the whole thing might be one of Babo's "expert frauds with the aim of self-promotion and/or of sounding out the local scene." Come the day, however, there was no Abdić and no report on "Dnevnik". Who was promoting whom - or what?

As we record below, listeners in Cazinska Krajina heard a rather different report about Abdić's non-rally.

## Flying the flag in Republika Srpska

**TV Srpska** appears to have settled its long-running dispute with the OSCE over commentaries by the station's general manager, Ilija Guzina.

Though SRT has reduced the level of its openly hostile campaign rhetoric, it still offers blatantly preferential treatment to the ruling SDS, continues to smear opposition groups and indirectly attacks Dayton. Whether or not the OSCE decides to despatch more unwelcome couriers to Pale, protests in hand, will depend largely on the international body's determination to enforce its own media protocols.

The long-sought official apology was aired on the 27 August "Novosti," nearly two months after TV

Srpska broadcast Guzina's original commentary. The text was hardly apologetic:

"On 29 June 'Novosti' aired a commentary by Ilija Guzina, general director of SRT, which the OSCE commission for media determined was a violation of the general peace agreement.

"The complaints related to the part of the commentary in which Mr. Guzina described Republika Srpska as a state, used the term "Muslim-Croat federation," and expressed alarm that some parties will surrender the entire RS into the hands of Alija Izetbegović. Therefore SRT, under the order of the OSCE's Media Experts Commission, broadcasts this apology in which it affirms that Mr. Guzina's commentary does not express the views of SRT nor of the RS government, and that it was given as a personal view and not in his capacity as general director."

Though Guzina's commentary was little more than a regurgitation of the SDS campaign platform, it appears the OSCE would rather challenge regime journalists than their political masters.

The practical consequences of the OSCE's belated intervention so far have been marginal. Even after the apology was broadcast, SRT continued to use the term "Muslim-Croat federation," and insisted that the vote would confirm RS statehood. In addition, "Novosti" apparently has refused to lift a ban on appearances by Predrag Radić, the Banja Luka mayor and leader of the Democratic Patriotic Bloc coalition.

Radić's ban was issued in letter form following the release of an official TV Srpska communiqué which said that the station would no longer give air time to political parties it deemed unpatriotic (see *Monitoring Report*, no. 10).

Even Radovan Karadžić, the former RS president banned from public life, seems to be making a comeback on the SRT campaign trail. Karadžić portraits have been prominently displayed in TV Srpska's blanket coverage of SDS campaign rallies. SDS leaders appear eager to exploit Karadžić's political martyrdom.

One example was an SDS rally in Čajniče aired on the 28 August "Novosti." Addressing the crowd, some of whom were waving Karadžić posters, Biljana Plavšić said: "One man once said, and said it very well - and his visage is present among us now - that 'we have completed our work. We have a Serbian state, like a jewel in our hands.'"

While TV Srpska continues to promote Karadžić's gradual apotheosis, **Srpska Radio** trained its sights on RS opposition parties. A meeting in Banja Luka between opposition representatives and U.S. envoy John Kornblum drew immediate charges by Radio Srpska's "Dnevnik" that a conspiracy to "reintegrate" the RS into the federation was afoot.

As Radio Srpska reported on 30 August, Kornblum's diplomacy appeared to be getting results: "Kornblum said that representatives of the opposition believe that after the elections new political structures will come to power in RS which will prevent Bosnia's partition. Such a position of the opposition, that is, of representatives of the League for Peace and Progress and the Democratic Patriotic Bloc, revealed a previously hidden side of their political programme, since these coalitions have until now stood for RS as a sovereign Serbian state."

Portraying the RS opposition as foreign stooges and/or as unreformed communists has been a central plank both in the SDS campaign and the regime media's general approach to the election debate. Such was the message Biljana Plavšić delivered at a rally in Derventa which was broadcast on Radio Srpska's 26 August "Dnevnik": "Beware those who for 45 years de-serbianised us, but who now wrap themselves in national costume."

Charges of treason can be seen as invitations to violence. There have been numerous bombings at opposition rallies in recent weeks, though injuries have until now been minor.

Further signs that an aggressive smear campaign against the RS opposition is intensifying came with the appearance of street posters which openly proclaim the League for Peace and Progress as traitors. Commendably, **Radio Krajina**, the Banja Luka-based, army-linked station, was the lone broadcaster to report on this development.

## All the election news that fits

**NTV Studio 99's** "Oko 22" continues to portray the election campaign as a compelling drama with which at least Sarajevo's nightowls must be obsessed. The programme broadcast about 90 election-related stories last week. On 27 and 28 August, 40 of "Oko 22"'s 60 minutes were devoted to the election. Nineteen separate items on the campaign were broadcast on the former date.

Among themes pursued, the following stood out:

- The announcement of the postponement of the local elections on 27 August. Ambassador Frowick's decision led the bulletin, followed by reactions from Carl Bildt and four parties. All of the latter supported the decision, but all also argued that it would make sense only if the P-2 registrations were now nullified as well. More party reactions followed over the next two nights. Of the nine parties or coalitions canvassed (three appeared twice), only the HDZ deprecated Frowick's decision. By 1 September the programme was also able to report on Frowick's assurance to Silajdžić that the P-2 forms would be null and void after 14 September.
- The incident at Mahala near Zvornik. IFOR's encounter with the Serbs and its aftermath were accorded top billing and extensive air time on 29 and 30 August. The agency pictures broadcast on the first night were gripping.
- The proposed meeting between Izetbegović and Milošević. The announcement that such a meeting was in prospect led "Oko 22" to conduct another poll of politicians. Of the four men interviewed, all gave at least conditional support to the planned encounter.
- "The Return to the Drina" rally at Grebak. A report from this SDA-Army rally led the bulletin on 31 August. "President of the Presidency of B&H and President of the SDA" Alija Izetbegović was said to have addressed the crowd, along with B&H Army Chief of Staff General Rasim Delić. "Oko 22" provided a short clip from Izetbegović's speech, but nothing from Delić's. Its interest lay in the pictures of mass Islamic rites, SDA and Arabic-lettered flags and soldiers clad in the white uniforms of holy warriors. These created an impression of some Iranian religious manifestation rather than of an anniversary important to the B&H Army.

The report from Grebak was broadcast again the next night, in its entirety, but now in the middle of the bulletin. B&H Assembly Deputy Igor Rajner (UBSD) was on hand to provide the requisite commentary. Remarking that although he had been pleased to hear from President Izetbegović's speech that the USA would not permit any secession by RS from B&H, he could not help but be worried by mass prayers, Arabic flags and white uniforms: "What sort of secession are we talking about? In this state or from this state?"

This is no way to go about getting one, whole and democratic B&H, that's for sure."

If TV B&H can be accused of having pussyfooted around this event, NTV Studio 99 seems to have gone in for overkill.

- The Associated List rally at Gradačac. "Okolo 22" also gave prominence on 1 September to the fact that the ZL B&H had managed to hold the previous day, and in front of a much larger crowd, the public meeting which had been broken up by hooligans on 10 August.

## Cheerleading from the sidelines

Since the festive launch of the HDZ B&H's "Peace is our choice" campaign in Sarajevo on 25 August, **Croatian Television (HRT)** has again expanded its B&H election coverage. It now offers a half-hour programme, "Izbori u BiH", every evening. This programme is also carried by HRT's satellite service for Europe, notwithstanding the electoral silence which was meant to prevail last week with the commencement of voting abroad. Most of the programming is explicit propaganda on behalf of the HDZ. Other parties appear only to be attacked. The promotional function is underlined by HDZ advertisements. No other B&H party messages are broadcast, save for the spots of Fikret Abdić. He promises every day that his DNZ will make a "little America" out of the ashes of B&H.

Although the HDZ continues generally to avoid polemics with its co-rulers, the SDA, the OSCE decision to postpone the local elections brought forth sharp reactions. B&H Foreign Minister Jadranko Prlić accused the international community of being inconsistent and supporting "that side which wants to blow up the Dayton agreement." Federation President Krešimir Zubak's criticism widened to include the Sarajevo media, "which keeps quiet about the fact that form P-2 was also filled in by 50,000 refugees in Sarajevo and 20,00 in Tuzla."

But HRT's own thorough coverage of the B&H political scene can also be rendered deaf, dumb and blind. Nothing was to be seen or heard last week of EU administrator Sir Martin Garrod's open challenge to six named west Mostar gangsters to come clean, nor of his condemnation of the continuing forcible evictions of Serbs and Muslims from their homes on the right bank of the Neretva.

**Television Serbia**, on the other hand, has recently paid less attention to the B&H election

campaign, perhaps because of increasing preoccupation with the late autumn elections at home. Such coverage as there was last week was devoted to the Socialist-led Alliance for Peace and Progress. Other parties were ignored. Nor was the postponement of the local elections much remarked upon from Belgrade. Such reaction as there was, was negative.

As far as RTS was concerned, the Bosnian news of the week was the visit of a Yugoslav economic delegation to Sarajevo. This visit, it was said, "received exceptional publicity in the Sarajevo media". By such means did Belgrade's "peace-forging" policy score another triumph.

## Abdić on the airwaves, but not in Velika Kladuša

**Radio Bihać** intensified its propaganda struggle against Fikret Abdić, his party and followers last week. As noted above, **Radio B&H** broadcast on 30 August a report from a correspondent in Velika Kladuša about a meeting of Abdić's DNZ which was supposed to take place in the town the next day. Radio Bihać repeated the same report in its "Hronika dana" on the evening of 31 August, but with a different introduction. This ran as follows:

"The registration of the party of the war criminal Fikret Abdić itself provoked strong protests from the citizens both of Unsko-Sanski canton and of **Velika Kladuša**. These protests became even more intense with the appearance of the pirate Radio Velkaton and the announcement that a promotion by the DNZ party of the criminal Fikret Abdić would be held on the square which bears the name of Ahmet Mržljak, legendary warrior of the B&H Army and bearer of the Golden Lily. In view of all this, four local associations have made a statement..." The text of the reporter's despatch then proceeded as on Radio B&H.

The contrast between the two stations' editorial treatments of the same despatch was indicative. Radio B&H appears to have sought to put a professional gloss on the report. Radio Bihać seems to have had no qualms about broadcasting an item which was inflammatory, slanderous, prejudicial and out of date.

Perhaps the citizens - and politicians - of Bihać get the media they want and deserve. A discussion of the media among representatives of the SDA, Party for B&H and Associated List took place the same evening on Radio Bihać's "BH izbori 96"

programme. Their chief worry was the parlous financial state of Radio Bihać. The SDA representative had a cure:

"We must centralise the whole system of public information. That would prevent disloyal rivalry. You have up till now worked each for yourselves - Radio Bihać and Radio Cazin, and Kladuša and Kupa. You have not had a united front. I am for a common programme, for a unified political stance which will be manifested through the media. I understand the media as our means of struggle."

The other party representatives neither dissented nor commented.

## Collaboration and resistance in Zenica

For the SDA, the news in Zenica last week was almost all good. None of the media reported an accusation by the opposition SDP that the local police chief had permitted the SDA to paint its logo on the streets. But **Radio Zenica**, **TV Zenica** and **NTV Zetel** all broadcast the SDA's heavy-handed denial, delivered in both a press-conference and a statement on 30 August.

The SDA implied that the SDP was attacking not the abuse of police powers but the national aspirations of the Bošnjak people. It referred to "the superseded communist ideology" that "forbade Bošnjak symbols" and dismissed the accusation as a "primitive attack" and "unsubstantiated fraud". On 31 August TV Zenica and NTV Zetel also reported that the head of the cantonal police had denied the accusation. He said the SDP had made it only because the police had arrested one of its candidates. End of story.

The manipulation of news in order to help the SDA was also apparent in coverage that was not directly political. Radio Zenica and TV Zenica were especially diligent at playing down news that might diminish the ruling authorities. They paid less attention than in previous weeks to the plight of invalids and other victims of the war. Instead, they focussed on more benign subjects, such as meetings between humanitarian organizations and local officials.

The independent station NTV Zetel was the notable exception. It alone showed itself willing to broadcast news unflattering to the authorities. It covered the NGO meetings, but also reported on the problems of demobilized soldiers and on the

failure of aid packages to reach invalids. TV Zenica reported on former soldiers, but only to cast blame on the manager of the Zenica steel plant, who was accused of not understanding their problems. The manager belongs to the Party for B&H.

There were other indications that Zetel was willing to cast its net wider for news. On its 31 August "Info-block", the Associated List called on the Army to leave the schools it had occupied during the war so that the buildings could be used as schools again. The other stations ignored this appeal, which implied a criticism of an institution inseparable from the SDA. Zetel also criticized government obstruction of TVIN, the would-be television network of which Zetel is a founding member. It reported, too, on SDS rallies in Republika Srpska that raised questions about the continuing influence of Radovan Karadžić. On the other hand, Zetel ignored a story that figured large on the other stations: problems with the registration of Associated List candidates.

Radio Zenica clearly favored the SDA in its political coverage. The station gave the SDA more time and invariably presented it in a favourable light. In a special election programme, Radio Zenica fawned on one SDA candidate. "He doesn't have to be introduced," the moderator said. "He's a very well-known member of the Army." The station did cover press conferences of the SPP and GDS, but only when they complained about the P2 forms, where the SDA agreed. An SDA rally in Matuzići yielded a small but significant difference in the coverage of Radio Zenica and TV Zenica. The rally was held by Muslims driven out of Doboj during the war. Some speakers at the rally affirmed the need for reconciliation, calling on Muslims and Serbs to live together and appealing to the Doboj Serbs to purge themselves of extremists. TV Zenica omitted the message of conciliation; Radio Zenica broadcast it.

Even on media vulnerable to the SDA-controlled local authorities, the party could not muzzle the opposition entirely. On 21 August **Radio Zavidovići** gave 20 minutes to a local SDA candidate. The next two days it gave only 10 minutes each to candidates of the Associated List and the Party for B&H. But the disadvantage did not prevent the Party for B&H candidate from delivering an unusually sharp attack on the SDA. She criticized the "intertwining of religious and secular power" in Bosnia and said the country was being led by "immoral and dubious people".

## Pride and prejudice in Tuzla

The postponing of local elections did little to dampen campaign enthusiasm in Tuzla last week, either on the streets or in the local media. The main rivals, the SDA and the Associated List, took their contest to a still higher pitch of activity, with rallies and statements and even some of the extra-curricular rough-housing seen before in the region. The media worked hard to keep up.

What kind of job they did can be seen by their coverage of a three-hour Associated List rally on 27 August in Tuzla. It was perhaps the biggest story of the week, and an event that even **TV TPK**, the cantonal television station, could not ignore. TV TPK normally slights non-SDA rallies, except when it aims to belittle them. On this occasion it played down the rally by giving it brief treatment on the evening "Dnevnik" and underestimating the crowd at "a few thousand". (**Radio Tuzla** guessed 10-15,000.) It also omitted the names of the main speakers, who included Tuzla Mayor Selim Bešliagić and Ivo Komšić, a Croat member of the Bosnian Presidency. It followed the report with a statement by the SDA promising to hold bigger rallies of its own on 7 and 10 September.

**TV Tuzla**, the municipal station, covered the rally without commentary but ignored the SDA response. It also went overboard on 28 August by broadcasting excerpts from the rally in a special broadcast after the evening news. Radio Tuzla produced the most balanced coverage of the day's events by reporting both the rally and the SDA response. Its reporter also noted that the rally was well organized and that the crowd cheered loudest for affirmations of ethnic tolerance in Tuzla.

The second big story of the week was the roughing up of a Tuzla woman by SDA supporters travelling to a rally outside the city on 31 August. Mayor Bešliagić condemned the incident publicly and demanded a police investigation. The SDA disclaimed responsibility. It did not deny the assault had taken place, but insisted that the SDA supporters had been provoked while driving through the city in a "peaceful and dignified manner". The culprit was "irritated by... insults against Bošnjak holy objects and hit a woman who was acting in an immoral way." Radio Tuzla and TV Tuzla reported the statements of both sides. TV TPK broadcast only the SDA side of the story.

The Associated List returned on 1 September to Gradačac, where SDA supporters broke up a rally

on 10 August. This time the thugs stayed home. So did TV TPK--it had already been to an SDA rally in Gradačac on 30 August. TV TPK did, however, give extensive play to a big HDZ rally in Tuzla on 28 August. The reason may be the non-aggression pact between the two ruling parties against the non-nationalist Associated List. Representatives of the HDZ, which is campaigning for a Croat municipality in Tuzla (Soli), sneered at the city's claim to tolerance. They insisted that Croats lived better under the cantonal (i.e. SDA) authorities, and compared Bešliagić to a Turkish ruler: "Big Pasha Bešliagić should know that his pashaluk is falling apart, and Croats will never again be anyone's window-dressing".

Through all of this the media played predictable roles. TV Tuzla covered both sides of the campaign but put out its best for the Associated List and Mayor Bešliagić. TV TPK long ago dropped any pretence of professional journalism. It continued to plump for the SDA. Last week the SDA was the subject of 13 reports. All other parties received just 12 mentions. One reason is that the journalist who covers the SDA is station manager Kasim Softic, himself an SDA candidate. The Associated List, perhaps despairing of fair coverage on "Dnevnik", bought an hour of air-time last week. Radio Tuzla proved again that it is the most even-handed news outlet in Tuzla. How long this lasts remains to be seen. The station director, Zoran Kapetanović, reportedly joined the SDA last week. This may bode ill for the final two weeks of the campaign, which promises to be hard fought in Tuzla.

## Taking sides in Mostar

Mostar may now have one mayor and one city council. The Croatian Republic of Herceg-Bosna may officially be no more. But the media divide remains as wide as ever. Broadcasters on the opposite banks of the Neretva are still trying to avoid sniping at one another, but they live in different information worlds.

**RTV Mostar** was compelled last week by further developments to mention retrospectively events which it had endeavoured to ignore when they occurred. The most embarrassing instance was the summons to jihad issued at the SDA meeting in Čapljina on 24 August. This caught up with RTV Mostar's "Dnevnik" on 27 August, when it had to report the party's condemnation of the offending effendi. (See *Monitoring Report* 13.)

In other respects it was a week of triumphs for RTV Mostar. In the first place, its support of the campaign to postpone the local elections and abolish the P-2 form was vindicated. Secondly, Sir Martin Garrod contrived to present the station with a veritable plum at his regular news conference on 30 August. The angry EU administrator challenged, by name, six purported west Mostar godfathers to do their utmost to put an end to the city's gangsterism. No commentary by "Dnevnik" was required. (It was enough that this report followed one on the worsening security situation in the city.) Finally, Herceg-Bosna passed away into history.

The station's preference for the SDA was, meanwhile, ever more obvious on screen.

No such observation is necessary in the case of **HTV Mostar**. Its absolute fealty to the HDZ has never been in doubt. Also unlike RTV Mostar, this station's week began better than it ended.

The highly choreographed start of the HDZ campaign in Sarajevo was lovingly charted on 26 August, as was the SDA's embarrassment over the Čapljina rally. The next day's bulletin used Abdić's DNZ to attack the SDA.

On 28 August HTV Mostar celebrated Herceg-Bosna's third birthday, and not before time. The occasion was used to warn the "federal partners" that Croats were now much better prepared to defend themselves than they had been in 1992.

Two days later, and the station had found a new reason for chastising the "so-called B&H presidency". The cause of editor Veselko Čerkez's anger on 30 August was the distribution of savings books "exclusively to members of the Muslim army" and not to veterans of the HVO, who "had done much more for the defence of B&H than the so-called B&H Army." This commentary was accompanied by pictures of marching men and manoeuvring tanks, but not of the destruction of Mostar's Old Bridge.

Čerkez also vented his anger that day at "Muslim extremists" who, he said, were carrying out more and more provocations as election day drew near. He did not, however, wax indignant over Sir Martin Garrod's remarks about some of west Mostar's most illustrious citizens - and regular guests on HTV Mostar. In fact, this small item of news was ignored altogether.

## Sarajevo Press Review

Sarajevo's three dailies continued last week to break their previous records for election coverage. They continued as well their assault on registration form P-2, even after Ambassador Robert Frowick's announcement on 27 August that municipal elections would be postponed. This half-victory having been won, they set their sights on the nullification of the P-2 form - and, presumably, of the right of DPs and refugees to cast their ballots in their places of current or intended abode. Following the lead of the SDA, the press reserved its indignation for the electoral manipulation which had been prepared in Republika Srpska and FR Yugoslavia. Little or nothing was written about the number of P-2 forms filed in the Federation, nor about the fact that the Serb entity plays host to a disproportionately large number of refugees and DPs.

*Oslobođenje* published 123 items on the elections in the period 26 August - 1 September, up from 120 the previous week. Frowick's decision to postpone the local elections was greeted with approbation, but also as a signal for the intensification of the paper's campaign to use the boycott threat to force further changes in the electoral rules. The SDA-led call to voters abroad to abstain from the impending poll was given splash coverage at mid-week, accompanied by a cartoon showing an oblivious OSCE pushing the elections downstream towards a cataract. By the end of the week, however, Frowick had explained that the completed P-2 forms were no longer valid, John Kornblum had mollified President Izetbegović and the SDA's threat to boycott the elections abroad had been lifted.

*Večernje novine* carried 109 election-related articles last week: 40 more than in the preceding seven days. The paper supported both the SDA's summons to voters to spurn the elections abroad and argued for their postponement in B&H as well. It accused Frowick and Bildt of using the elections to negate the Dayton agreement. This offensive petered out following the SDA's decision to proceed with the poll abroad. But the paper's campaign against Fikret Abdić was vigorously pursued.

*Dnevni Avaz* also put out a record number of election pieces last week: 89 (up 9 on the previous week). It offered sensational coverage of Frowick's dilemma over the local elections and expressed open dissatisfaction with his decision.



By the end of the week the paper was pushing its exclusive story that a Dayton Mark II was in the works.

On 30 August, when the voting abroad had already commenced, Avaz published the results of its own public opinion poll on the elections. This showed that 42 per cent of respondents favoured a boycott, 26 per cent were opposed and 32 per cent had no opinion. Given the near-unanimity with which the Sarajevo media had promoted a boycott, this was an underwhelming result, the most striking aspect of which was the large number of undecided (or couldn't care less?) replies.

The number of articles on the elections carried by the weeklies doubled last week. *Svijet* (29 August) featured pieces both on the violent incidents which have marred this campaign and comparisons with the elections of 1990. One of the latter articles drew attention to the fact that many of the candidates in 1990 are running again. Another recalled the promises made by prominent politicians in 1990, including their assurances that there would be no war. *Svijet* also included a report on the campaign in Banja Luka.

*Ljiljan's* front page headline (28 August) proclaimed that "90,000 dead Serbs will vote in the elections". The text that followed alleged that some 400,000 Serbs and Croats were being used for purposes of "electoral engineering", although no explanation of how this figure was arrived at was offered. Interviews with Kasim Begić (a member of the PEC) and Muhamed Filipović (leader of the LBO) served also to discredit the 14 September poll.

Only *Hrvatska riječ* resisted the prevailing current last week - and twice over. In a special edition on 27 August it celebrated the success of the HDZ's big rally in Sarajevo's Skenderija Centre the previous week-end; while in its regular edition on 31 August it carried several articles regretting or attacking the decision to decouple the municipal elections from the general and cantonal votes. Portraying themselves as Dayton's best friends, Krešimir Zubak, Božo Rajić and Srećko Vučina expressed foreboding that - as in Mostar - the international community would continue to bow to Bošnjak pressure and underwrite electoral irregularities.

The following media were monitored for this week's report: *RTV Srpska, RTV BiH, Radio Studio 99, NTV 99, TV Zenica, NTV Zetel, Radio Zenica, Radio Zavidovići, Radio Tuzla, TV TPK Tuzla, TV Tuzla, Radio Prijedor, Radio Bihać, RTV Mostar, Hrvatska RTV Mostar, Radio Krajina Banja Luka, TV Srbije, Hrvatska televizija, Oslobođenje, Večernje novine, Dnevni Avaz, Ljiljan, Svijet, Hrvatska riječ, Nezavisne novine, Glas srpski, Zmaj od Bosne, Glas srski, Dnevne nezavisne novine, Alternativa, Ekstra magazin, Nezavisne novine.*

## She loves me, she loves me not. . . (8)

The table below shows the presence of political parties, their leaders and multi-party coalitions on the state-run broadcast media of both the Federation and Republika Srpska in the week 26 August - 1 September. The column headed "total" indicates how many times each party or its leader appeared (directly or indirectly) or was mentioned in the central daily newscasts on both radio and television of RTV B&H and SRT. Each party is awarded a score which represents the sum of every positive mention (+1), every neutral mention ( 0 ) and every negative mention (-1). The column headed "Σ (+,-,0)" shows the results. The higher the number, the greater is that broadcaster's sympathy for or devotion to the party or politician. The lower the number, on the other hand, the more can the broadcaster be said to regard that party or its leader with disrespect or antipathy. The closer the total to zero, the more likely it is that the party receives equitable treatment by the broadcaster

name of party / coalition	RTV BiH		RTV Srpska	
	total	Σ (+,-,0)	total	Σ (+,-,0)
<i>party</i>				
Stranka demokratske akcije <i>SDA</i>	27	+4	13	-13
Srpska demokratska stranka (SZ) <i>SDS</i>	1	-1	42	+35
Hrvatska demokratska zajednica BiH <i>HDZ</i>	4	-1	4	-3
Stranka za BiH	6	0		
Srpska patriotska stranka <i>SPAS</i>			3	-1
Srpska radikalna stranka <i>RS</i>			3	0
Narodna stranka <i>RS</i>			4	+1
Srpska stranka Krajine			4	+1
Liberalna Stranka BiH <i>LS</i>	3	0		

name of party / coalition	RTV BiH		RTV Srpska	
	total	Σ (+,-,0)	total	Σ (+,-,0)
Liberalno bošnjačka organizacija <i>LBO</i>	3	0		
Bosanska stranka				
Građanska demokratska stranka BiH <i>GDS</i>	6	0		
Muslimansko bošnjačka organizacija <i>MBO</i> (1)				
Hrvatska seljačka stranka BiH <i>HSS</i> (1)	2	0		
Unija bosanskohercegovačkih socijaldemokrata <i>UBSD</i> (1)	2	0		
Socijal demokratska partija BiH <i>SDP</i> (1)	2	0		
Socijalistička partija RS (3)			1	0
Radikalni otadžbinski front "Nikola Pašić"			5	+2
Srpska seljačka stranka			4	1
Stranka privrednog prosperiteta <i>SPP</i>	2	0		
Republikanska stranka (1)	2	0		
Srpska radnička stranka			1	0
Stranka srpskog jedinstva			1	+1
Narodna demokratska zajednica	1	-1		
Hrvatska čista stranka prava <i>HČSP</i>	1	0		
Hrvatska kršćanska demokratska unija <i>HKDU</i>	1	0		
BH Patriotska stranka	2	0		
<i>coalition</i>				
Demokratski patriotski blok RS			6	-1
Savez za mir i progres RS			6	0
Združena lista za BiH	7	+1		

- (1) Parties that belong to the coalition Združena lista za BiH  
(2) Parties that belong to the coalition Demokratski partijski blok RS  
(3) Parties that belong to the coalition Savez za mir i progres RS

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The Institute for War and Peace Reporting is an independent conflict-monitoring and media-support charity which works to inform the international debate on conflict and to provide a platform and other support for voices of moderation caught in war. It publishes the monthly journal *War Report* and the bimonthly *Tribunal*, a review of The Hague International War Crimes Tribunal. For subscriptions and other information, contact IWPR at 33 Islington High Street, London N1 9LH. Tel + 44-171-713-7130 / Fax 713-7140 / E-mail: warreport@gn.apc.org.

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MEDIA PLAN is Bosnia's first private company specialising in media research and analysis. Its central aim is to promote the renewal and development of the B&H media. The company has at its disposal an extensive data-base on the Bosnian media scene. MEDIA PLAN has correspondents in Tuzla, Zenica, Mostar, Banja Luka and Bihać, as well as in Sarajevo. Eighteen monitors, researchers and other staff are engaged in work on *Monitoring Report*.

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